

NOV 27 1966

Approved For Release 2001/06/27 : CIA-RDP70-00058R000300010011-5

Double-One-O Reporting

THE SECRET SURRENDER. By Allen Dulles. Illustrated. 268 pp. New York: Harper & Row. \$5.95.

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By S. L. A. MARSHALL

DOUBLE-ONE-O, the retired director of the Central Intelligence Agency, may have missed his calling. As a writer of whodunits, instead of a weaver of dark plots in real life, he might not only have made the grade but a whopping stake, too. For he can put sicc into his prose, create suspense where there should be none, cloak his characters in mystery and squeeze the last ounce of drama from any situation involving them.

If this sounds like the creator of 007, the resemblance is not wholly coincidental. Double-one-O, who worked in 007's vineyard, has had somewhat less world renown numerally until the publishing of this book. Nothing in it is more delightful than the anecdote by which rare Allen Dulles reveals that he was once 110.

The story is about Operation Sunrise—the Dulles-inspired undertaking to bring about an early surrender of the German Army in Italy and so the collapse of Hitler's power. The obstacles, delays and disappointments were so numerous and repetitive that it is a wonder he stayed with it. But at last things were moving. O.S.S. agent Dulles, deep in thought and returning to rest after a wearying conference, was walking a dim hotel corridor. A stranger came up and asked: "I beg of you, where is 110?" Mr. Dulles was about to reply: "You're talking to him. I'm 110," when it suddenly occurred to him that the questioner might be looking for his hotel room.

NO BIG man except Allen Dulles would tell such a story on himself, though it fits like a glove and is more whimsical than any of the gaffes of James Bond. Allen Dulles is an unusually reflective man with a great heart for the game that he played for so many years. Were it not so, there would be no story here. It is good stuff not because the results of his personal striving and risk-taking were of such earth-shaking importance, but because there is so much of Dulles in it. From the long-range view, one would simply have to say that the consequences of his large hope and effort were in the historical sense anticlimactic.

German resistance to the idea continued too long; the complications besetting the possibility of a surrender in Italy in early April 1945

were beyond any man's solution. The opportunity was seized at the earliest moment; the frustrations that came of so doing are the best part of this chronicle. As things worked out, the surrender was obtained as April faded, but had to be kept secret for several days into May, when Winston Churchill broke the news of it. By then, Hitler had destroyed himself in the Berlin bunker, and the world knew that the Third Reich was surviving only hour by hour. What had happened in Italy, unlike the Turkish surrender in Mesopotamia in 1918, was a non sequitur.

Historian Chester G. Starr of the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy devotes only one line to the surrender of the German Army in Italy. He claims that by the time they gave in they were enveloped in such fashion that they had no military alternative.

It is not told so by Mr. Dulles. His project was a labor of love—his heart, his best self had gone into it. And therein lies the story. So saying is not to minimize it. Had not Operation Sunrise been pushed to a diagrammable success, Allen Dulles might not have stayed with intelligence operations, in which case our national history would have run a different course, for this man had a profound influence on the events of our day, well after Operation Sunrise. One cannot imagine him staying with the game had he been balked.

So what we have here is the first-to-last account of the conspiracy between the Americans—Allen Dulles leading—and the Germans, told in utmost detail. The trivial incident that almost upsets the applecart, the alternate play of hope and fear, the dilemmas and agonies of mind of members of the cast, the clashes between personalities, the *mise-en-scene* when the plotters foregather, the elaborate precautions taken by the security officers—the author deeply savors all morsels such as these, and if he did not keep a bulging diary then his gift for recall is simply prodigious.

Deep-dyed villains skulk in the background—Hitler, Himmler, Kaltenbrunner, and others—foliers from way back. In the foreground are heroic rascals such as Gen. Karl Wolff, commander of the S.S. in Italy. Of all the good guys on the right side of the table, from Gen. Ulman L. Lemnitzer to Little Wally, the Czech radio operator who was a real daredevil, the author writes with an admiration tinged with deep affection.

The book succeeds only because Mr. Dulles lets himself go. His feeling for his service, the O.S.S., and for the late Wild Bill Donovan, who helped and led him, is high-bounding. He leads me to add that there are

curious errors in the writing that reflect careless editing. Donovan is identified as an ex-colonel of "the famous Fighting Irish 69th Division." That would be the one-time 69th Regiment which became the 165th when Wild Bill had it. The German stab-in-the-back myth is misinterpreted. Its essence was not that Germany signed an armistice on the basis of the Fourteen Points only to be cheated, but that her armies were betrayed by the upsurge of Red revolution on the home front.

Now that 110, in his seventies, seems well-launched on a wholly new career, he will have to be more careful about such items, for there are always fly-speckers about.